

AN ⁶
APOLOGY
AND
ADVICE
For some of the
CLERGY,
Who Suffer under
FALSE, and SCANDALOUS
REPORTS.

Written on the Occasion of the Second Part
Of the

Rehearsal Transpos'd :
IN A
LETTER
TO A
FRIEND :

And by Him Publish'd.

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For some of the

CLERGY

Who Suffer under

FALSE, and SCANDALOUS
REPORTS.

SIR,

I Have now read the second part of the *Rebearsal Trans-*
posed, which you so earnestly recommend to me in
your last : And am very sorry to see that the difference
between those ingenious men is inflamed to this
height ; and that the Controversie should be so far run out
into matters of personal abuse. I shall not tell you at this

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time

Geo. Gregory 2. 13. '33 cat. 311 p 381 f/6 (242.)

time who I think hath the better in the argument; This is obvious, That *M. M.* hath much the advantage in the *Reproaching* part. For though I confidently believe that his Adversary is clear, as to the foul things laid to his charge by this Author; Yet He is a Clergy man, and it is not enough for them to be innocent, while there are any who have the ill-will to accuse them; and such there will be, while there are *Scells*, and *Jovial Atheists* in the world. I have nothing to say in particular of the personal matters; only this I will adventure to observe; That I think you do amiss in conceiving so great a prejudice against the Authour of the *E. P.* from those *uncertain*, if not *untrue* things, which his heated Antagonist hath said of Him. You know it is a great piece of Injustice to entertain Reports hastily of any man, and especially of the Ministers of Religion, whom so many take pleasure to defame, either out of design to disgrace their profession, or to excuse, and extenuate their own villainy by it. And I intreat you to consider that there may be such a concurrence of unhappy circumstances upon a Clergy-man, that is very vertuous, and very Innocent, as may render him exceedingly obnoxious in the opinion of those that have none, or but a *slight knowledge* of him. I shall recite some of those circumstances, which I believe may come pretty near the present Case, and which concern some others (besides this Learned, and Ingenious Gentleman,) for whom you profess to have affection, and esteem.

First, Then, when a Divine hath any different apprehensions from common Thoughts, though but in *Philosophy*, and speculation; Yet this alone shall prepare dislike and unkindness for him in some, who will be apt presently to judge him a conceited, and phantastick Affecter of *Novelties*, though he be never so unlike that character; and this prejudice disposeth them to receive with gladness, any report to his disadvantage.

But if he step out of the road in *Theological* matters, and dare dissent from the usual systemes in any of the Controversies of Religion: If he contradict any opinion they have taught, or defend any Article of Truth in a way which they have

have not heard; or if these things are but said, or suspected of him; it shall be enough to render him first a *strange* man in their thoughts; and after that, any Monster that the malice of his enemies shall paint Him like.

If it happen, over and above this, that he falls into publick Controversie with any presum'd Orthodox man of note, what ever the Cause be, what ever reason, and justice he may have on his side, 'tis odds but he shall receive a blot from the contest; And though he should write nothing but Demonstrations, and his adversary nothing but absurdities; Though he shamefully baffle, and confute him in the judgement of all ingenious, and impartial men; Yet 'tis all one, The supposed Orthodox Disputer shall triumph among his common easie Admirers, while his Antagonist shall be hang'd and drawn, unheard and unknown: And whatever the other affirms of him in Corners, shall spread and sound, and beget him prejudice, and distastes, though it be never so false, or unlikely.

2. If this Clergy-man be one that sets himself with earnest, and successful zeal to detect and reprove the sins, and follies of any popular *Setts* of Religion; If he speak out with courage, and Resolution, and shame their darling vanities, either from the Press, or from the Pulpit; He then raiseth upon himself the most angry Nest of Hornets in the world; and must look to be persecuted with their noise and stings without mercy, and without end. For if the most wary and silent of the Conforming Clergy, who offend them not, are stigmatized by many of them as *prophane and ignorant* men; If they can scarce escape the imputation of being Drunkards, and debauch't persons, and are sure to be accounted, (at the best) *strangers*, if not *enemies* to the Life and power of Religion, and the Mysteries of the Gospel: What then must be their portion, who openly, and impartially set themselves to disgrace their beloved phancies? Certainly there is no mans reputation (be he never so innocent) that can stand before *such* and *so many* enemies as this freedom of necessary and just reproof will raise upon him: every Word he speaks shall be rack't, and every

Action he doth shall be canvast, and both examin'd with all the Criticisme of subtle malice, till some scandalous matter be extorted from them to furnish out reproachful stories: And *these* when they are up, will run, and spread like Fire in a train of Gun-powder. The enraged Parties are pleased, and tickled at the heart by them; They never inquire into their truth, or falshood: 'Tis *convenient* that ill things be said, and believ'd of those Enemies of Godliness, (as they account all whom they reckon *theirs*) And therefore they blow those leud Tales about with all the pleasure of Revenge, and all the zeal of ignorance and ill-will: And there are people every where, who are prepared, and ready to give hearty welcome to any foul story of a conforming Minister: For ye know how every corner of the Land abounds with Enemies of the Church, and all that adhere unto it: so that they have the wind, and are Masters of fame; and when they set on it can blast the clearest Innocence under Heavens; and set on it they will, when they are confronted, and exposed by just, and smart Reprehensions. So that there was scarce ever any man that dealt roundly and honestly with them, but came away loaded with the dirt of their dung-hills; and more, or less, infected with the poison of their breath.

3. If this Church-man be wont to reprehend the pretended *Wits*, and *Wits* of the Age, with spirit and smartness, and endeavour to render the *Drollers* and *Buffoons* odious, and contemptible, as they deserve; If he be sharp, and frequent in reproving and exposing the concomitant *Abuse*, and vile humour of deriding Religion and things Sacred; He then draws the *Railers*, and *Jesters* upon his back, who will put a thousand tricks upon him, and persecute him with their scoffs in all companies, and make him the constant mark of their malicious sport.

Now You know Sir, what a *sinking* sort of people these are in our times, and how far this fooling will go with some to render those contemptible in their esteem, that deserve better thoughts of them. There is much malice in mankind, which this humour gratifyeth, when it exposeth any
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mans name to scorn and laughter; especially it is tickled when any of the Clergy are derided: So that no worth, no virtue, no Accomplishments are fence against this set of men: Yea the more eminent any of these are, the more subject to such wrongs, and the more the common Envy makes such abuses spread. For even the Sects that pretend to the greatest seriousness and gravity of humour are transported with the wit, that aims at making the *Sons* of the Church ridiculous, especially when it falls on those who have been so hardy as to declare against their dear follies, and fall on them it shall, while there are Buffoons to be hired for that service.

4. If the Minister useth to be close and pungent upon the great *Debauchees* of the Age, and endeavours by any more than ordinary earnestness, and power of reproof to make them despicable, and vile in the eyes and thoughts of all men:

If besides this in general, he chance to incur the particular ill-will and displeasure of any one, or more of them, (though innocently, and without giving just ground of offence) He must expect the utmost of their rage. They will toss his name about in every Ale-house and Tavern; and make Him their constant subject, and their *Song*. They will inflame all their company, and acquaintance against him, and make it a great entertainment of their meetings to raise odious stories of him, which they will publish in all their neighbourhoods, and so blacken him, as if he were a Devil, though he be the most innocent person breathing. They will propagate and improve all the slanders that have been raised on him by his *Furious* Adversaries: And they again entertain and spread all those that are invented by these debauched ones; and so between the one and the other, they will make him appear as a very vile, and odious person, be he never so virtuous and unblameable in his conversation.

Thus an innocent man that doth nothing but his Duty, may by it draw all the worst sort of Enemies upon him: And if he be a person free, and open in speaking of his mind, and not pharisaical and superstitious in his actions (though

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never so honest and harmless in them) Such openness, and unaffected freedom affords matter and occasion to the malice of those that lye in wait for him; and makes way for the belief of the ill things they injuriously fasten upon his name. And if to all the rest this be added, That he be a person not inclined to converse much in common companies, or to make friends by such Conversations; If he be intimately known but to a few, and only superficially and by hearsays, to others, the slanderous tales raised upon him shall spread with so much the less stop, or contradiction. When these unhappy Circumstances meet in any person, he will certainly be defamed and run down, though he have the piety of a Saint, and the Innocency of a Chrysostome Infant.

And now the usual Scandals that such Enemies endeavour to fasten on the Clergy are, those of *Drinking*, and *Women*. For the first, they ordinarily fix it upon the merry men, who are of the humour for Company, and common Conversation: But as for those who seldom or never go into publick Houses, nor are any way disposed to the jollity of the boon-Companions, They have no colour nor occasion to lay the reproach of *Drinking* upon them: And therefore the *Other* must be their Portion. For that is a sort of imputation that will bear upon any man; and 'tis such, as one cannot well stir in for his vindication. 'Tis a scandal that renders the person most vile among the more sober, and religious, and affords most matter for the malicious merriment and sport of his prophane and Atheistical Enemies: And therefore if he be a single-man, If he now and then be in Company with those of the other Sex, and be spoken well of by any of them: These shall then be ground and matter for the plot; and many Scenes of scandal and abuse shall continually be made out of it.

*And now Sir, if you reflect on the recited particulars, and mind that they have been the Circumstances of some innocent persons of your acquaintance, and will but be so just as to consider how many of them concur in the present case, You will see that you ought not hastily to believe the foul Stories put upon the *Ambour* of the Ecclesiastical Policy, nor the like
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of any other Clergy-man, that is under such Circumstances as those. And I beseech you to call to mind how much our Religion obligeth us to practise candour, and charity in our judging one another, and how much we may need it our selves. You know who tells us that *Charity thinketh no evil; It suffereth long and is kind; is not easily provoked; rejoiceth not in Iniquity; viz.* It is not willing to hear, or entertain reproaches of ones Neighbours; It hath no pleasure in them; It judgeth by the Rules of kindness, and love, which covers multitudes of evils, and beareth long before it be incensed by defaming stories. According to such measures a Christian ought to govern his thoughts, and speeches of every private person: But especially Charity and many other Considerations will require it from him in reference to the *Clergy*. The malice of men makes them usually glad at heart to hear evil of their Brother. This pleaseth the envious humour, and is a kind of set off to those that pride themselves in not being guilty of such Crimes; and serves to lessen the faults they have, (in their own opinion, at least,) and so pleaseth exceedingly in the comparison: But this malice and readiness to calumniate is not so eager, and severe upon any as the *Clergy*, especially in *this Age*, in which they are so contemn'd, and worried by the *Atheists*, and *prophane* on the one hand; and by the *Papists*, and *Sells* on the other. This ought to be remembred, and suspense to be held on our belief on Consideration of it, till the evidence be notorious; And then too, men ought not to be forward to publish the shame of such persons, in whose esteem the honour, and interests of Religion, are so much concern'd. On which account a scandal upon one of the *sacred* function is more pernicious, than in other cases, because thereby the mouths of the *Atheists*, and *prophane* are opened against the whole Profession, if not against the Foundation of it. And the effect of his Ministry is obstructed as to others, who else might have received much benefit from his Labours. So that every good Christian ought to have tenderness for the reputation of the *Clergy*; And the want of it among us, is perhaps one of the greatest scandals

of the *Reformation*, and that which hath been an unhappy hinderance to the Reverence and propagation of the excellent Religion it professeth. /

But I need not insist on this, in writing to one, whose own thoughts can furnish him with plenty of Reasons against this dilingenuous Practice: Only give me leave to add, That to slander and abuse *Those of this Coat* is a Cowardly and ungentlemanly kind of baseness. For the *Clergy* are a sort of naked, disarmed men, that have no Defence but their Innocence, and the sacredness of their profession; And *this* hath been protection to them, amidst the rudeness of the most barbarous Nations: For the most brutish Indians would not offer any sort of violence to the Priesthood; and respect to this Order seems to have been an universal acknowledgement of Mankind: So that to fall on *These*, on every occasion, and without any, and to tear their Names (the dearest part of them) by malicious falsehoods, and abuses, is barbarous beyond the ferity of Cannibals. And 'tis certainly a very ungentlemanly practice; It being like fighting with women, or assaulting one whose hands are bound; and hath not the Liberty of defending, or righting himself in the ways that are common to the rest of men: so that methinks none but the most rascall spirits, and infamous Cowards should be guilty of this baseness.

I thus lightly pass over these Reflections, in which I doubt not but I have your concurrence, and come to a passage of your Letter, in which I differ from your opinion.

You would have the Author of the *E. P.* to refute, and disprove those things of *Immorality* which his Adversary chargeth on him; and you think if he be guiltless, he owes himself and his Profession this right.

For my part I verily believe him innocent; But yet, if I were fit to be consulted, I should by no means advise his writing any particular vindication: The things are too foul to be touch'd by his hands, and such spots are better worn out by time and patience, than wiped off by hasty Zeal of Reputation. Dirt while it is green will not be struck off clear, but the very wiping of it fastens some stain, and spreads it.

it further: Industrious *Apologies*, in such cases, beget suspicions, and raise more scandal: And 'tis a scandalous thing, to have so much appearance of guilt, as to seem greatly concerned to clear ones Innocence; such lewd Reproaches will dye of themselves when they are let alone, and despised; but they are revived, and kept alive by much ado of answering, and refusing: The best way for any man to confute a slander, is to do it by the greater strictness of his Life: And if I was to counsel any Clergy man that was saln under such circumstances of misfortune, Ple tell you how I would Advise.

(1.) I would perswade him to examine strictly, what occasion he may have given by any appearance of the vices with which he is reproach'd. 'Tis not sufficient for the Clergy to *avoid evil*, but they must stand off out of the shadow of it. Many things are lawful and harmless, that yet are not expedient, especially for men of sacred Character: And therefore if such a one find, that though his Conscience be clear, yet his prudence hath been defective; and that he hath not been enough cautelous, and watchful in the midst of so many enemies; He ought to blame his own unweariness, and to resolve for the future upon more strictness in observing the Rules of expedience, as well as those of Duty: And not to content himself to fly from vice, but to get at what distance he can from any thing that looks like 't.

(2.) If he be clear of the things imputed to him, He ought then to consider narrowly of what other sins he is guilty, that may be the reason of Gods leaving him to the fury of malicious Revilers. David did so when *Shimei* curst; He considered the permission of such an abuse as a judgement from Him, without discharging his rage on his railing enemy: And certainly when a man is exposed to causeless infamy, there is something more than malice, and misfortune in the case: God is to be remembered in it, and the provocations he hath received from our unquestionable sins. These he ought to call over in his thoughts, and to humble himself before the Divine Majesty under the sense and apprehension of them. He should consider these as the main Adversaries

that have hurt him, and execute his revenge *here*, in destroying, without mercy, these enemies of his soul, as well as of his credit: He should resolve to be more careful that his *ways please the Lord*, and *then his enemies will be at peace with him*.

(3.) I would have him tye himself to a greater, and more severe Industry in the Duties of his place: And though he were constant, and laborious in those offices before; yet should he study to *double his diligence*, and be more assiduous (if possible) after such usage. He should joyn constant *Catechising* to constant *Preaching*, and *frequent Sacraments* to both; And study how *otherwise* to promote the spiritual advantage of his people; and endeavour to do it with all Conscience both towards *God*, and *them*. He should punctually perform *all* that his Rule requires, without *deviations*, or *omissions*; and not content with doing but just what is required of him, He should imploy himself in all those particular Industries (that the Law allows) that he judgeth tending to the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion, and the Edification of his charge: And take example for his practice from the *strictest* and most *laborious* Divines, yea and strive even to *exceed* them, in all painful and faithful diligence.

(4.) It is further advisable, in my Opinion, That such an injured Minister, betake himself to great *Privacy* and *Retiredness* of living; That he be not frequent in unnecessary visits; that he mingle not ordinarily with common, and promiscuous companies; That he be not seen much abroad, but when he is about urgent affairs, and those especially that relate to his Office; That he go not without great cause to publick Houses, or places of resort: But that he stick close to his studies, and the preparations that are requisite for the due discharge of his great, and important business.

However severe these Rules may be thought, I judge they are exceedingly expedient, if not necessary, for a person in the Circumstances we suppose. And really there is so much wickedness, folly, and trifling in the ordinary conversations of the world, That methinks no serious, intelligent man should endure to
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be much in it. And as to the Clergy, There is so much captiousness, and malicious watching upon their words and actions; so much of what will give them just offence, and which they ought not to hear without reproof; And so much offence ready to be taken at them, and so many affronts ready to follow that, if they do reprove; That I see not how they can *honestly* and *safely* converse, except with a few known friends, though the malice of false reports hath not yet touch'd them. And in my judgement 'tis most advisable for all the Clergy, in this evil Generation, to draw up (as far as is possible) into privacy, and retirement; For the Sea is too rough for them to be abroad upon it: But especially those on whom Envy, and ill-will have fastned any slanderous imputations, are of all Ministers, and all men, the most concern'd to live in as much silence, and reservedness, as their publick Office will permit.

These things, I know, (and by *some experience*) will contribute very much to the quiet and vindication of such an injured person, and more than all the verbal Apologies in the world: Or if they succeed not to clear his name, and restore him to the good opinion of men; There is yet no doubt but they will give him peace and approbation with God, and Conscience, which is infinitely better.

And if after all this, malice and Infamy should persecute him still; If it should continue upon him the *old* slanders, and out of nothing, and no appearance raise *new ones* to disquiet him, He need not, He *ought* not be concern'd, but may despise those impudent falsehoods, and scorn to trouble himself to disprove them. He should not yield his enemies the satisfaction of having vexed, and discomposed him: But rest himself contented with his Innocence, and the Testimony of his Conscience; blessing God that he is not such a person as they would render him to the world, and praying Him to give them a due sense of this their sin, and to pardon them upon their Repentance. In order to which excellent temper, He should frequently consider Him who with much long-suffering *endured the contradictions* of all sorts of sinners, and was reproach'd and vilified in his name, as well as injuriously

treated in his person : And since they call'd Him, our Lord, *Beelzebub*, and publisht him for a *Wine-Bibber*, a *Glas-ton*, and a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*, why should we care what they call us ; or be at all moved at the *Reproaches*, which we have not deserv'd ? *Mens-Tongues are their own*, and they *will speak* ; and let them say what they will, they cannot hurt us, while we are innocent, if our own *niceness*, and *virtuous tenderness* of our names, do not assist their malice. This all good and wise men should endeavour to overcome, and outgrow ; But chiefly the Clergy, and those of them especially of whom we are now speaking, ought to be well fortified against this weakness ; That they may avoid the temptations to discouragement, impatience, and many other sins, and follies, that an over great concernment for Reputation doth expose men to : That they may go on with courage, and an equal mind, through good Report, and ill Report, in doing of their duty : That they may gain the noble height of wisdom, and Religion to count it a small thing to be *approved and applauded by the judgement*, and voices of *men* ; and may attain the generosity of despising popular Fame, otherwise than as it may facilitate their doing good ; considering, that *This* is most commonly given to the *foolish-est and worst of men*, and *things* ; while *infamy and reproach* is usually bestowed upon the *worthiest and the best*.

By such *Exercises*, and such *Considerations as these* ; the scandall'd person shall either wipe off the slanders that are upon him : Or strengthen himself so as not to be hurt by them.

Thus I have let my pen run on as the humour of writing bad me : If to *no other purpose* ; Yet the employment hath given a little present diversion to my self : And I know you can be content that I should sometimes write for the little end of venting my own thoughts, in declaring my *opinion*, which I have now given you freely, in this matter, and with it the *experience* of

Your Friend.